

英语语言学 基础读本

李延福 等编

A FIRST COURSE
IN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS

山东大学出版社

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English Linguistics

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前 言

英语语言学基础课已列为全国高等院校英语专业高年级必修课之一。在目前尚无全国统编教材的情况下，我们应教学之急需，并受有关兄弟院校之促使，编成此书，供英语语言学基础课的教师和同学参考试用。

本书共分十八个单元。每单元包括课文、注释、讨论与复习题、练习以及补充阅读材料。课文取材于英美语言学原著，结合我国教学实际情况进行了删节或改写，主要介绍有关英语语言学的概念、基本知识和基础理论；注释，用以补充、扩大有关英语语言学的基本知识；讨论与复习题，旨在帮助学生理解有关英语语言学的基本理论；练习的目的在于巩固和检验学生对基本概念的理解，基本知识的掌握和基本理论的运用。

编排原则是，先有概念性的单词填充、后有释义性的配句或辨义，再有实践性的应用，最后是检查性的综合填充。补充阅读材料则是对每课课文内容的补充、扩大和深化，同时又自成体系，使学生在学过课文、做过练习之后，再一次获得对英语语言学较为完整的认识，为以后系统和全面地学习英语语言学以及其他语言理论课打下基础。

书末附有语言学家简介和术语表，供参阅。

本书由李延福、张清民、温洪瑞、佟光武等同志编写，承黄嘉德、傅赳寰等教授审定。参加初稿编写工作的除编者外，尚有李亚非、刘健、傅祿宁诸同志。为本书始稿汇集材料的还有贺永功和李学珍两同志。

在编写过程中，全国英语教材编写组组长许国璋教授和山东大学校长吴富恒教授始终给予很大的支持和鼓励，并作了具体指导。山东大学教务处、科研处及外文系领导对本书的编写与出版也非常关心，给予了各方面的支持。

对上述诸位前辈、各级领导以及所有同志的关怀和帮助，深为感激，谨此致谢。

由于我们水平所限，疏漏与不足之处在所难免，请读者赐教。

编 者

1984年12月

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Unit One

The Nature of Linguistics

The ability of human beings to talk — to use language in order to communicate with one another — is so universal and seems so natural that most of us never bother to think much of it. We take it for granted that every normal human being can talk, just as we take it for granted that we can eat, sleep, or walk.

Though it is true that every normal human being is able to use language, it is misleading to compare the ability to use language with his ability to eat, sleep, or walk. All of these abilities are passed on to us from our parents. In the case of language, however, it is only the *ability* to talk and understand that we inherit from our parents; the particular language that we speak is something that we learn and are taught, not something that we know by instinct.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language¹, how a language is constructed; how it varies through space and changes through time; and how it is used by its speaker. Fundamental to all branches of linguistics is the basic question: What is language?

How does it work? What happens when a speaker says something and a hearer understands him?

In order to understand all those basic questions, let us consider a typical speech event in which a speaker says something and is understood by a hearer. How does this speaker formulate his message? How is it transmitted to the hearer? And how does the hearer understand it? There seem to be eleven different stages in the whole process.

1. *Semantic encoding.* The first thing the speaker must do is to formulate his message in the semantic units that his language uses. Since this is like putting a message into proper shape to fit the code in which it is being sent, we can call this stage "semantic encoding."
2. *Grammatical encoding.* Once a speaker has chosen the proper semantic units for the message that he wants to send, his next task is to find the corresponding grammatical units and to arrange them in the way required by the grammar of his language. For example, if we want to make an English message out of the semantic units *boy*, *buy*, and *watch*, we can encode them grammatically as *The boy buys the watch*.
3. *Phonological encoding.* Once a speaker has given the proper grammatical encoding to his message, we can assume that it consists simply of morphemes

(minimal distinctive units of grammar). What the speaker must now do is to convert each morpheme into one or more phonemes (minimal units in the sound system of a language) .

4-8. *Sending, transmission, receiving.* The first three stages in our typical speech event have now been completed: the message has been encoded (1) semantically, (2) grammatically, and (3) phonologically. We are now ready for the next five stages, two for sending, one for transmission, and two for receiving. As encoded thus far, the message consists of a sequence of phonemes. At stage (4) the speaker sends instructions from his brain to his speech organs, telling them what movements to make for each phoneme. At stage (5) the speech organs make these movements and thereby set the air molecules into vibrations, producing audible sound. At stage (6) these vibrations fan out from the speaker's mouth and are transmitted to any listener within hearing. At stage (7) the vibrations produce corresponding vibrations in the hearer's middle and inner ear. And at stage (8) the energy of these vibrations is carried from the hearer's ear to his brain.

9-11. *Phonological, grammatical, semantic decoding.* At this point the process of decoding begins. As the hearer receives the energy of the message

in the brain, he must decode it (9) phonologically, (10) grammatically, and (11) semantically.

This, of course, is possible only if he possesses, somewhere inside his head, the same total code as the speaker—that is, if he knows the same language.

Now that we have described the whole process of a typical speech event, it is natural and necessary to know the various aspects of language with which linguistics is concerned. *Phonetics* is the study of the articulation and classification of sounds; *phonology* is the study of how the sounds are organized and how they function in language; *morphology* is the study of the words of a language and the inflections used to form new words; *syntax* is the study of the way words are put together to form phrases and sentences; *semantics* is the study of meaning, and the change in meaning, in language forms.

Like other disciplines, linguistics has various subdivisions. *Historical*, or *diachronic*, *linguistics* is concerned with language development through time. *Comparative linguistics* deals with relationships among languages. *Descriptive*, or *synchronic*, *linguistics* aims at analysing and describing the state of a language at a given time in its evolution. There are also specialized divisions, such as *dialec-*

tōlogy, the study of geographic and social varieties, and *lexicography*, the branch of applied linguistics that deals with dictionary-making. All of these have a contribution to make.

As the most striking development in modern linguistics, the study of language has been carried over into related fields. They include such joint fields of study as *psycholinguistics*, which deals with how language is acquired, understood and produced; *sociolinguistics*, which is concerned with the diversity of language as it relates to various sociological factors; *anthropological linguistics*, which concerned with how language fits into the larger context of sociocultural behaviour and, most specifically, with how grammar is a part of culture; *neurolinguistics*, which is concerned with a number of issues that relate to the neurological basis of language, the brain's anatomy, the species specificity of language, and the relationship between language and consciousness.

In the application of its findings, linguistics has extended into such areas as foreign language teaching, machine translation and *computer linguistics* with its related types of research such as *computational linguistics*, *mathematical linguistics*, *statistical linguistics*, and *mechanolinguistics*. As with so many other fields of study, the more we learn of

linguistics, the more we realize how little we have yet know.

(Adapted from William G. Moulton. "The Nature and History of Linguistics," in Archibald A. Hill, ed. *Linguistics*, 1: 3-17. Washington D. C.; Voice of America Forum Lectures, 1975.)

Notes

1. The scientific study of language, as we interpret it today, did ~~not~~ actually begin until the nineteenth century, and then it was called not linguistics but comparative *philology*—primarily the study nad classification of written documents, including stone carvings and clay tablets. Before that came *grammar* and before that, *rhetoric*—the use of language as a means of effective communication and persuasion.

(from Fred West. *The Way of Language: An Introduction* 2, 27. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1975.)

For Discussion and Review

1. What distinguishes man as "the talking animal"? Why?
2. Why is it misleading to compare the use of lan-

guage with the ability to eat, sleep and walk?

3. What is linguistics?
4. What do you think are the basic questions fundamental to all branches of linguistics?
5. List different stages in the whole process of a speech event to illustrate how a hearer understands it when a speaker says something.
6. Define the following linguistic terms, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics
7. Try to cite some joint fields of study in terms of the development in modern linguistics.
8. What do you think of the study of linguistics so far?

Exercises

1. Fill in the blanks of the following statements with an appropriate word or phrase.
 - 1) To understand our humanity, therefore, we must understand the _____ that makes us human.
 - 2) The possession of _____, more than any other attribute, distinguishes humans from other animals.
 - 3) According to the philosophy expressed in the myths and religions of many people, it is _____ that is the source of human life

and power.

4) _____ is the scientific study of language.

5) _____, _____, _____, are the three main branches of linguistics.

6) _____, is the study of geographic and social varieties.

7) _____ is the branch of applied linguistics that deals with dictionary-making.

8) Sociolinguistics relates to various _____ factors.

9) Anthropological linguistics views language across _____.

10) Neurolinguistics is the study of the _____ basis of language and _____ function underlying language acquisition and use of language.

2. Match the following phrases in Column A with the linguistic terms in Column B.

Column A

Column B

1) the study of the words _____ of a language

a. syntax

2) the study of the sounds _____ of a language

b. phonetics

3) the study of the meaning _____ of a language

c. semantics

- 4) the study of the sound d. phonology
pattern of a language
- 5) the study of the sentence e. morphology
pattern of a language
3. Arrange the following phrases in order of the
stages of the process of a speech event.
 - 1) the physical act of speaking
 - 2) the physical process of hearing
 - 3) sound waves in the atmosphere
 - 4) understanding the idea by the hearer
 - 5) an ideational stimulus to the mind of the
speaker
 - 6) the formation of a language statement by the
speaker
 - 7) the mental sorting of the language statement by
the hearer

4. Cloze Test

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. As an academic discipline the development of this subject has been recent and rapid, having become particularly widely known and taught in the 1960s.

Different branches may be distinguished, according to the linguist's focus and range of interest. A major distinction, introduced by *Ferdinand de Saussure*, is between _____ and _____ linguistics, the former referring to the study of

• • •